

October 17, 1967

Dr. Hugh McDevitt
Department of Medicine

Dear Dr. McDevitt:

I have given the matter of your manuscript considerable thought, and have reached the conclusion that it is really not quite appropriate for the Proceedings. I would strongly recommend the Journal of Immunology or Genetics, and I am sure that either journal would be very happy to take it.

I have a few small notes on the manuscript which could be illustrated by the slips enclosed. No. 1 is a suggested alternative notation which I think might conceivably be slightly clearer, although that could be very much a matter of taste. No. 2 on page 3 - what does 509 mean? No. 3 - it would be very desirable to test coisogenic lines. Since there are number of such lines that have been selected for the difference of a single H-2 antigen, this should be fairly easy to do. No. 4 on page 12 - I make a remark "linked to but separable from". Page 13, with respect to tests on homologous haptens: Is it possible that there is a qualitative difference, partially obscured by the quantitative one? Have HG or HGA been tested as haptens? My last comment is that the hypothesis of autotolerance as the mechanism of non-responsivity seems unlikely on account of the dominance of the positive response, but it would probably still be worthwhile to cross-immunize the lines with extracts of the other to see if there is a cross reaction with his antigens.

Joshua Lederberg

Enclosed is the manuscript I mentioned to you the other day on "Genetic Control of the Antibody Response in Inbred Mice; Transfer of Response by Spleen Cells and Linkage to the Major Histocompatibility (H-2) Locus".

Note added: Dec. 27, 1998 30 years later.

My hypercritical reaction turned out to be very ill-founded indeed; as Hugh McDevitt had made a very important discovery. We could not then know that the "histocompatibility antigens" were totally bound up with antigen presentation. Instead, I presumably thought that he had encountered one among many possible candidates for antibody-response modifiers, fortuitously linked to the MHC.

At any rate, his paper was published - as I recall in Journal of Experimental Medicine; and it remains widely cited. He has rightfully often teased me about the event.

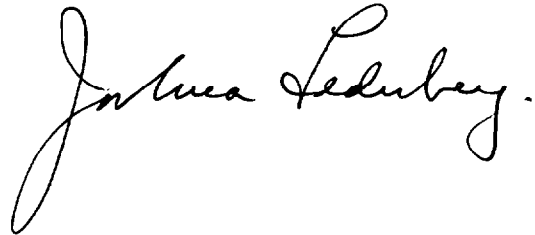
For an updating, see:

The role of MHC class II molecules in susceptibility and resistance to autoimmunity

McDevitt HO

CURRENT OPINION IN IMMUNOLOGY

10: (6) 677-681 DEC 1998

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Janina Ledubey." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.